

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. W. M. Benidickson (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question. Is the present discount, vis-à-vis the United States dollar, the equivalent of what the minister described in his budget speech as "a significant discount"? Those are the words he used when he described the aim of the government with respect to international exchange.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman will do me the honour of reading that speech very carefully he will see that the expression "significant discount" was related to circumstances at a particular time, and circumstances may vary. But I think the hon. member is aware that I have expressed the view that thus far the results of the change in the external value of the Canadian dollar have been quite satisfactory in the view of the government.

Mr. Hellyer: Significant.

TELEVISION**TORONTO—REPORTED TRANSFER TO U.S. OF INTEREST IN PRIVATE STATION**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillingate): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue. Before doing so, if I might be permitted, I should like to express what I am sure is the view of the whole house that we are very glad to see the minister back in the house.

The question I wish to put to the hon. gentleman is, has he any statement to make on the fantastic story which has appeared in the press that a very substantial interest in the private television station in the city of Toronto is to be transferred to United States interests?

Hon. George C. Nowlan (Minister of National Revenue): I appreciate the very kindly reference which has been made by the hon. member. I would have preferred, however, to have him confine himself to the flattering reference without the embarrassing question. Having had a heart attack, I have been prevented by the doctors from reading fantastic stories, so I have not seen the one to which the hon. member refers. However, I shall give consideration to his statement and advise the house later.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**INQUIRY AS TO APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND DIRECTORS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): I should like to ask the Minister of Transport if he [Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

can tell us whether the government is having any difficulty in finding directors for the Canadian National Railways, and also what the situation is so far as the status of the president and chairman is concerned.

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, these nominations will be made very soon. So far as the second part of the question is concerned, there is no change in the status of the president.

CIVIL DEFENCE**PETERBOROUGH—REPORTED GAPS IN WARNING SYSTEM**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Walter Pitman (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence, especially in view of the statement which has just been made. Is the minister of defence aware that gaps in the alert system which showed up during civil defence exercises at Peterborough last January, and which were reported immediately, have not been filled? If so, could he assure these officials that the situation will be rectified immediately?

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Minister of National Defence): I think the hon. member is referring to the siren system in Peterborough. I believe this system was installed in 1957 on the basis of a noise level survey made at that time by the department of health and welfare, which then had the responsibility for the siren system. There were certain gaps shown in the system in the last exercise, Tocsin, which was held, and a new survey is being undertaken of the noise level. It is proposed to add additional sirens in order to cover any deficiency which may be found to exist.

Mr. Pitman: Will the Minister of National Defence make a comment on the press statement by army officials of the eastern Ontario command that the sirens being installed for civil defence are primarily aimed at alerting people outside of buildings and not those inside buildings?

Mr. Harkness: I have inquired into this matter, and I find that no such statement was issued. I think there is some confusion over the fact that part of a lecture which was given by army officers on survival methods, and on warnings, states that sirens are more effective in warning people outside of buildings than inside. This is only natural. If you were deep inside a bank vault you would not hear the siren at all. However, in the normal house you do hear it. It is quite evident that any siren is going to be more effective in warning people outside than in